



For Release October 13, 2017

**Contact: Sean Casey, First 5 Contra Costa
(415) 246-8285 or scasey@first5coco.org**

Governor Brown Signs Bill to Make Child Care More Accessible in Bay Area

Bill will improve child care subsidy programs in Contra Costa, Marin and Sonoma Counties

(Concord, CA) Yesterday, Governor Brown signed AB-435 (Thurmond), which will provide needed relief to subsidized child care systems in Contra Costa, Marin and Sonoma Counties, where the high cost of doing business leaves many child care programs struggling to keep their doors open, and many low-income families with limited options for quality child care.

AB435 will provide Contra Costa, Marin and Sonoma Counties with more flexibility in using state-allocated child care subsidy funds for low-income children. The current system, which undercompensates Bay Area child care providers and underserves low-income children, results in millions of dollars in child care subsidies returned to the state. Combined, the three counties returned \$4.5 million in 2015.

“This bill provides another powerful tool for Bay Area early learning systems to ensure that every dollar allocated is spent and as many children as possible get the high-quality child care experience they deserve,” said Sean Casey, Executive Director of First 5 Contra Costa, a co-sponsor of the bill along with the Contra Costa County Office of Education.

By 2019, subsidy programs in these counties will have the flexibility to increase income eligibility guidelines and serve more children, offer higher reimbursement rates to providers, and contract with programs that can fully use available subsidies.

Governor Brown cited the need to establish a more efficient and flexible subsidy system for local partners as reasons for signing the bill.

“The child care subsidy pilot allows families to stay on subsidy longer making it possible for children to have continuity of care during the early learning years, which is essential for relationship building and optimal development,” said Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, Karen Sakata.

AB-435 is modeled after successful local child care subsidy pilots implemented in Alameda, San Mateo and San Francisco Counties.

“The flexibility AB-435 provides will help our program to serve more families and compensate our teachers at a more equitable rate,” said Brenda Brown, Director of the Concord Child Care Center. “Low-income children have the most to gain from high-quality child care. AB-435 will help ensure we can continue to be here to serve them.”

(more)

First 5 Contra Costa

First 5 Contra Costa invests in programs and advocates for policies focused on children during their first five years, the most important time in children's development. Since 2000, First 5 Contra Costa has invested more than \$140 million in Proposition 10 tobacco tax funds to help Contra Costa's children get the best start in life. Learn more: www.first5coco.org.

Contra Costa County Office of Education - Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education: The Contra Costa County Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education (LPC), a program of the County Office of Education, works to promote quality child care through community assessment, advocacy, resource development, and collaboration with other organizations. Learn more: www.pla4kids.org.

###